

All in the Family - Part VI

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Summary: Fifteen years after their marriage an old enemy returns to threaten those Lee and Amanda love.

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All in the Family

Part VI

The next morning Lee and Amanda sat in their office trying to get a little work done. The emotional past few days were taking their toll and neither felt much like going over the endless expense reports sitting before them.

"We should have known," Amanda stated simply looking over at her husband.

"Amanda, how could we have known?" Lee replied. "We never talk about the boys here, especially not by name, and Jamie didn't even tell us he was seeing anyone. There is absolutely no way we could have known."

All of a sudden Amanda began laughing. What started as a low chuckle quickly built and filled the room.

"Amanda!" Lee demanded in astonishment, "Amanda, what in the world is so funny?"

Trying hard to bring her laughter under control Amanda looked at him and attempted an explanation. "It's just...Lee, we're spies. Everyday we figure out the secrets of countless people, and we couldn't even figure out that our son was dating one of our best agents. It's just

ironic that's all."

Lee began to chuckle right along with her, the absurdity of the situation slowly sinking in. The laughter slowly eased the tension that had been building over the last few days. They continued to laugh, tears streaming down their faces as Lee commented, "I wish I could have seen the looks on our faces when Elizabeth walked into that room and Jamie called her by name. What luck! The second time in his life that he's been deceived by spies; not many people can claim that."

"Do you remember when we told them?" Amanda asked. At the time it had been far from funny. Dotty and the boys had felt so betrayed, but now, after ten years of healing, it was slightly comical. "Do you remember how Mother snuck around for weeks trying to test our 'spy skills'?"

"Oh yeah, do I ever remember that - she nearly gave me a heart attack more than once. Do you remember how many times she called me at work with messages from you? She would say things like, 'Now, I'm not sure if this is spy code, but Amanda asked me to call you and see if you could pick up some milk on your way home.'"

They were both laughing so hard at the old memories that they missed the sound of their office door swinging open. "Well, here I was, so worried about the two of you after I heard about Assi Birol that I decided to come and check up on you - I guess I didn't have much to worry about."

"Billy!" Lee greeted his friend with a smile and a hearty handshake.

"Hi Sir!" Amanda added wiping her eyes.

"Amanda," Billy Melrose looked at his friend, "I have known you for 18 years, you're married to a man I consider my own son, and I'm the godfather of your daughter - when are you ever going to start calling me Billy?"

"I'm sorry, Sir," Amanda grinned at their private joke. In 18 years she had very rarely referred to Billy Melrose as anything other than Sir. However, at this point it was more a term of affection than of formality.

"To what do we owe this honor?" Lee asked. "It's not everyday that the head of the agency stops by for a chat with two lowly section chiefs."

"Nothing official," Billy remarked ignoring Lee's comment with a roll of his eyes. "I heard about Assi Birol and I was worried about the two of you. I know things like that can open up old wounds."

"Thanks Billy, but really we're alright," Lee replied deciding to leave out the previous nights' tension. "Elizabeth Mathers is trying to get inside his operation."

"Good choice," Billy smiled. "I like that girl - she reminds me of someone I use to know." Billy shot a knowing glance in Lee's direction. "By the way, what's got the two of you so tickled? I don't

remember ever laughing that hard in all the years I held this job."

"We were just thinking about when we told my family about the agency, Sir," Amanda replied with a hint of laughter still in her voice.

"When you told your family about the agency? What about when you told Francine about your marriage?" Billy asked, the laughter beginning once again.

"Oh, that was fun too," Amanda remarked. "I will never forget that look on her face as long as I live. She looked like she'd swallowed a canary."

The three of them laughed together, allowing the stress to further dwindle from the room. Finally Billy turned to leave, "Well, there's work to be done. I just wanted to check in on you two. Let me know if you need anything."

"Oh Lee, I needed that," Amanda commented as she slumped back in her chair. "I feel like a new woman."

Just as they were turning back to their papers a knock came at the office door. "Come in!" Amanda called.

"Hi," Elizabeth walked in. Amanda studied the girl standing in front of her. Outside, in her crisp business suit, she was the picture of professionalism. However, there was something in her voice, a detachment that worried Amanda.

"Lizzie, have a seat," Amanda gestured to a near-by chair. "How are you?"

Ignoring the concern in Amanda's voice Elizabeth handed Lee a file folder. "I made contact last night. I think he buys the cover, and he's definitely interested. He's far too paranoid to trust me with anything substantial yet, but I'm seeing him again tonight. My progress report is in the folder."

Amanda gave an inward sigh, and wondered if all the progress she had made with Elizabeth had been lost forever. Elizabeth had just briefed them in perfect form, but that flat tone in her voice tugged at Amanda's heart.

As Lee flipped through the report, handing each page to Amanda as he finished, the room was once again filled with an awkward tension. The silence hung so thickly in the air it was almost tangible. Elizabeth stood rigidly before her superiors with a formality that was uncharacteristically removed. Whatever troubles Elizabeth had had with her personal feelings in the past, never before had she been anything less than passionate about her work.

"Lizzie this is solid work," Lee looked up from the report handing the last page to Amanda. "Just keep doing what you're doing; he'll open up."

"This really is good work," Amanda smiled tentatively at Elizabeth as she finished the report. As she made the comment Amanda watched Elizabeth, silently crossing her fingers and praying that Elizabeth

would open up about something - Jamie, the assignment - she didn't really care as long as Elizabeth did something other than stand statue-like before them. Years of experience had taught Amanda that the most dangerous agent was an agent that operated from a place far removed from the emotional realities of the job.

"Thank you." Elizabeth replied with more than a hint of tension in her voice. "Do you need anything else?"

"No," Amanda replied the worry evident in her voice. "Just keep us informed."

Elizabeth turned and quickly hurried from the room, the heavy wooden door slamming behind her.

"Lee, maybe we should pull her," Amanda suggested. "She's not herself."

Lee looked at his wife and gestured to Elizabeth's report. "Maybe not, but she's on top of this assignment. We can't pull her for lying to herself about being in love. If we pulled agents for that, I'd have been out of a job 18 years ago."

"I know, I know," Amanda sighed shaking her head, "I just don't like where this is heading."

**

Elizabeth met Assi at Rocko's bar later that afternoon. "Hi there," Assi mumbled placing a kiss on her lips.

Elizabeth forced herself to respond. She hated this so much. 'I'm playing a role,' she told herself. 'This is part of my job, it's not who I am.' Yet the taste of Birol's lips made her sick to her stomach. 'What was that I thought earlier about this assignment being easier on my stomach?' she mused. 'I wish they were Jamie's lips,' she allowed herself only a brief detour to think of Jamie. Despite her earlier protest to Amanda she still wanted to believe that there was a chance for her and Jamie. 'No!' she scolded herself. 'This is too dangerous. Whatever happens, I've got to make sure he stays away from me!'

"Penny for your thoughts?" Assi cut into her inner monologue.

"Oh, it's nothing," Elizabeth replied. "I'm just still fuming about my job. Another agent who's been at the agency for far less time than I have was promoted over me today. I'm tired to playing second fiddle to those who don't work half as hard as I do!"

"Poor thing," Assi cooed. "How does dinner at my place sound? Maybe that will cheer you up a bit."

'Like hell on earth,' Elizabeth thought trying desperately to ignore the way his hand had somehow found its way to her leg. She forced down the bile that threatened to rise in her throat. As little as Elizabeth wanted to go with him, she knew that with every hour she spent with Assi she got closer and closer to discovering his base of operations.

In the short two days they'd known one another Assi had made it

abundantly clear that he liked her. However, she really didn't know much more now than when she started. No matter how much he liked her looks, Assi was smarter than that. Last night he'd hinted around about the possibility of having her gather some information on government projects for him, but that didn't much help her determine his target. Francine's snitch had reported that he had overheard Assi talking about bombs, but they didn't have any idea what he was targeting, or even a clue as to where he was hiding the explosives. Like Addi had fifteen years earlier, Assi had numerous houses around town. She would have to keep playing this little game and hope that his trust in her would grow. "That sounds wonderful," she forced herself to purr against his lips.

Assi took her hand and led her from the bar. A half a mile away the homing signal in the agency van began to beep. "Here we go boys!" Francine called as she roared the van into action.

End
file.